The low level wastes are provided treatment by various methods such as chemical treatment, evaporation ion exchange, etc., to retain bulk of the radioactivity. The liquid that brings radioactivity to very low levels after treatment is monitored and discharged to the nearby water body after dilution. The concentrates are immobilised in cement matrix and treated as solid radioactive waste.

Private sector's participation in nuclear energy field

1013. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is intending to allow private sector participation in the area of utilization of nuclear energy;

(b) if so, the extent to which the participation would be allowed by Government and by when it would be allowed; and

(c) whether some private sector companies have shown interest in this field, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) Atomic Energy Act permits nuclear power generation by a Government Company in which at least 51% ownership is by Central Government. Private Sector participation in nuclear power generation at a larger level requires amendment of the Atomic Energy Act. All aspects of private participation in nuclear power including the nuclear fuel cycle management, safety and security issues, need to be evaluated before crystallising the policy in this regard.

(c) Private companies like Reliance Power, Tata Power, GMR Energy etc. have shown interest in this field. In addition, public sector company NTPC have also expressed interest. These companies have been advised to be associated with the Government company Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) in the first instance, to get experience in this field.

Coal supply to power plants

†1014. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Coal India Limited has adequate reserves to supply coal to power plants of the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that due to acute shortage of coal in power generation stations in various States, power generation has gone down; and

(c) the quantity of coal imported by the Ministry from other countries during the year 2007-08?

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY COAL (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): (a) Planning Commission finalises the Annual Plan for Ministry of Coal, which decides the sector-wise supply plan, including coal supplies to power utilities. As per the Annual Plan 2009-2010 which is under finalization, Coal India Limited (CIL) is expected to supply 312 million tonnes to Power Utilities, as against the projected demand of 318 million tonnes on CIL. Thus, there is a gap of 6 million tonnes, which is likely to be met through imports.

(b) No, Sir. There is no acute shortage of coal for supply to power utilities. Against the demand of 373 million tonnes including 8 million tonnes for stock building during 2008-09 for power utilities, assessed by the Planning Commission, indigenous availability was planned at 336.69 million tonnes, resulting in gap of 36.31 million tonnes which was envisaged to be met through imports. CIL has supplied 242.87 million tonnes during April, 2008 to January, 2009 (provisional), as against Annual Plan target of 239.94 million tonnes. However, the power utilities did not import as per targets fixed by Ministry of Power, resulting in lesser availability than anticipated. However, the power generation during April, 2008 to January, 2009 was 393.906 billion units as compared to 372.156 billion units during corresponding period of last year, showing a growth of about 5.8%

(c) Government does not import coal. However, various consumers including power sector imported 49.79 million tonnes of coal during 2007-08.

Demand of coal

1015. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI:
SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Coal India Ltd. is importing coal this year because of its inability to meet industry demand, in spite of India having the fourth largest coal reserves in the world;

(b) if so, how the projected 731 million tones demand of coal by 2012 would be met with the domestic coal production being estimated at 680 million tones by 2012; and

(c) whether Government is thinking of improving domestic production by deregulating coal and involving private sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SANTOSH BAGRODIA): (a) to (c) The Working Group on Coal and Lignite for Eleventh Plan, constituted by Planning Commission has assessed the demand for coal by 2012 to be 731 MT as against the estimated indigenous coal production of 680 Million Tonnes. The demand-supply gap of about 51 MT would need to be met from imports. Further, increase in production from captive blocks would also contribute towards bridging this gap.

Although India is having fourth largest coal resources in the world as of now at 264 billion tonnes, it is to be noted that only about 25 per cent of this is extractable. Further, coal reserves occur as horizontal deposits which are to be extracted in a sequential manner starting from the top